

Self's 10 Most Inspiring Women

Sarah
Palin
Governor
Take A Stand

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Sarah Palin
(R-Alaska)

AND 9 GOVERNORS WE LOVE

For showing the country
(and the world) that
women are cut out to lead

Four of the last five presidents arrived at the White House with the same job title at the top of their résumé: governor. That's one reason it's so exciting to see a record nine women heading up states across the country. In Alaska, known for its politics-as-usual culture, the 43-year-old Republican governor Sarah Palin, a commercial fisherwoman, marathon runner and mother of four, recently signed a sweeping ethics bill into law and has approval ratings as high as 93 percent to show for it. Kansas governor Kathleen Sebelius, 59, has so impressed voters with her support of education and public safety (while slashing \$1 billion in government waste) that fellow Democrats have mentioned her as a nominee for vice president in 2008. The two are joined by seven others: governors Kathleen

Blanco of Louisiana, Christine Gregoire of Washington, Jennifer Granholm of Michigan, Linda Lingle of Hawaii, Ruth Ann Minner of Delaware, Janet Napolitano of Arizona and M. Jodi Rell of Connecticut.

It's a growing club and an important one, Sebelius says. "Women acting as CEOs—governors, mayors, corporate leaders—are role models for other women and, particularly, for young girls,"

she tells SELF. "But we also have a huge opportunity to effect change as employers, seeking out talented women and looking for ways to position [them] for leadership roles in the future." That is something we can all feel good about.

LET THEM INSPIRE YOU "Try running for office, helping in a campaign or just becoming an informed voter—all are strategic ways to get involved," Sebelius says.

—Sara Austin, Erin Bried,
Francesca Castagnoli and Amy Gallo

Janet
Napolitano
(D-Ariz.)

Jennifer
Granholm
(D-Mich.)

Kathleen
Sebelius
(D-Kans.)

Ruth Ann
Minner
(D-Del.)

Linda Lingle
(R-Hawaii)

M. Jodi Rell
(R-Conn.)

Kathleen
Blanco
(D-La.)

Christine
Gregoire
(D-Wash.)

Leading ladies
"Women bring their life experiences to decision making—and our lives are simply different from men's," says Governor Sebelius, above, of Kansas.